Main Ritual

UEA 20th Anniversary

Bristlecone Glen

This ritual came together in strange ways. We are indebted to Tony Kelly of Celene Community in Wales who wrote the body of it in a piece called "Pagan Musings" in 1973, Kenny and Tzipora for the Wine Blessing, and Thomas Palmer of Denver for the Cakes Blessing. The Quarters calling and dismissals were written by Rowan Moonstone and revised by Bristlecone Glen. Devin Storm, Harper to Bristlecone wrote the God and Goddess Invocations, the Circle Closing, and the Crone's speech. We learned this particular version of "We All Come From the Goddess/Hoof and Horn" with the God verse from the Old Timers from United Earth Assembly and the Witches' Version of " Amazing Grace" was taught to us by Margot Adler at the America the Beautiful celebration in Colorado Springs in July of 1993. All these various parts came together into one of the most powerful rituals we have ever seen.

We give it back to the community now with love and thanks. It is our heritage and our future. We give back to the Earth that which we have been given.

Bristlecone Glen

Cast:

- High Priestess
- High Priest
- Harper
- Grey Man
- Crone
- Quarters Callers

Props:

- Cauldron
- Cakes & Wine
- Dry Ice

- Glow Sticks
- Chalice
- Basket
- Flash Paper

Quarters candles should be set up and lit before Circle. Altar Candles lit. A cauldron sits in the north. In the cauldron should be glow sticks to light it from within, a pan of dry ice, a candle, and the chalice. The Crone sits, cloaked and hooded, by the Cauldron. The Harper sits in the east, an empty stool sits beside the Harper.

Cast Circle and purify sacred space as is the custom of your circle.

> Spirits of the East!
> Air, Breath of our ancestors
> Be with us in this Circle
> That we may KNOW we are the children of the Gods.

> Spirits of the South!
> Fire, Will of our ancestors,
> Be with us in this Circle
> That we may have the WILL to claim our heritage.

> Spirits of the West!
> Water, Blood of our ancestors,
> Be with us in this Circle
> That we may DARE to do the work of the Gods.

> Spirits of the North!
> Earth, Bones of our ancestors,
> Be with us in this Circle
> That we may NO LONGER BE SILENT, but may meet as one in love to do the work of the Old Ones.

HP:

Maiden bring Your Flowers
Mother, Bring Your Child
Old One bring your Wisdom
Bright Lady, Cerridwen
We welcome Thee to this Circle in Herne's name.
For we are the blush of Thy silken cheek.
We are the children You hold to Your breast.
We are the Carriers of Your ancient way.
Bright Lady, Cerridwen, Welcome!

HPS:

Hunter, bring Your prowess
Warrior, bring your skill.
Father, bring your guidance.
Ancient One, Horned Crown
We welcome Thee to this Circle in Thy Lady's name.
For we are the flight of the arrow from Thy bow.
We are the edge of the sword of Thy honor.
We are the sparks of the flame of Thy love.
Ancient One, Horned Crowned, Welcome!

HPS:

We're of the old religion, sired of Time, and born of our beloved Earth Mother. For too long the people have trodden a stony path that goes only onward beneath a sky that goes only upwards.

HP:

The Horned God plays in a lonely glade for the people are scattered in this barren age and the winds carry his plaintive notes over deserted heaths and reedy moors and into the lonely grasses.

(Grey Man raps staff on ground comes into center of Circle unobserved by the HP/S. When he speaks, HP/S should be startled.)

Grey Man:

> Who know now the ancient tongue of the Moon? And who speaks still with the Goddess? The magic of the land of Lirien and the old pagan gods have withered in the dragons breath; the old ways of magic have slipped into the well of the past, and only the rocks now remember what the moon told us long ago, and what we learned from the trees, and the voices of grasses and the scents of flowers.

(HP/S begin to spiral into the center of the Circle to meet the Grey Man.)

HP:

> We're pagans and we worship the pagan gods, and among the people there are witches yet who speak with the moon and dance with the Horned One.

HPS:

> But a witch is a rare pagan in these days, deep and inscrutable, recognizable only by their own kind, by the light in their eyes and the love in their breasts, by the magic in their hands and the lilt of their tongue and by their knowledge of the real.

HP:

> But the Wiccan way is one way. There are many; there are pagans the world over who worship the Earth Mother and the Sky Father, the Rain God and the Rainbow Goddess, the Dark One and the Hag on the mountain, the Moon Goddess and the little People in the mists on the other side of the veil.

HPS:

> A pagan is one who worships the goddesses and gods of nature, whether by observation or by study, whether by love or admiration, or whether in their sacred rites with the Moon, or the great festivals of the Sun.

Grey Man:

> Many suns ago, as the pale dawn of reason crept across the pagan sky, man grew out of believing in THE GODS.

Harper:

He has yet to grow out of disbelieving in them.

Grey Man:

He who splits the Goddess on an existence-nonexistence dichotomy will earn himself only paradoxes, for the gods are not so divided and nor the magic lands of the Brother of Time.

Harper:

Does a mind exist?

Grey Man:

Ask her and she will tell you yes, but seek her out, and she'll elude you. She is in every place, and in no place, and you'll see her works in all places, but herself in none. Existence was the second-born from the Mother's womb and contains neither the first-born, nor the unborn. Show us your mind, and we'll show you the gods!

Harper:

No matter that you can't, for we can't show you the gods. But come with us and the Goddess herself will be our love and the God will call the tune.

Grey Man:

But a brass penny for your reason; for logic is a closed ring, and the child doesn't validate the Mother, nor the dream the dreamer. (Grey Man turns to face the seated Crone. Speaks almost as if talking to himself) And what matter the wars of opposites to she who has fallen in love with a whirlwind or to the lover of the arching rainbow.

Harper:

(To HP/S) But tell us of your Goddess as you love her, and the gods that guide your works, and we'll listen with wonder, for to do less would be arrogant. but we'll do more, for the heart of man is aching for memories only half forgotten, and the Old Ones only half unseen.

HP:

We'll write the old myths as they were always written and we'll read them on the rocks and in the caves and in the deep of the greenwood's shade, and we'll hear them in the rippling mountain streams and in the rustling of the leaves, and we'll see them in the storm clouds, and in the evening mists. We've no wish to create a new religion for our religion is as old as the hills and older, and we've no wish to bring differences together.

Harper:

Differences are like different flowers in a meadow, and we are all one in the Mother.

HPS:

What need is there for a pagan movement since our religion has no teachings and we hear it in the wind and feel it in the stones and the Moon will dance with us as she will?

Harper:

There is a need. For long the Divider has been among our people and the tribes of man are no more. The sons of the Sky Father have all but conquered nature, but they have poisoned her breast and the Mother is sad for the butterflies are dying and the night draws on.

Grey Man:

A curse on the conqueror!

HP/S:

But not of us!

Harper:

For they curse themselves for they are nature too.

Grey Man:

> They have stolen our magic and sold it to the mindbenders and the mindbenders tramp a maze that has no outlet for they fear the real for the One who guards the path. Where are the pagan shrines? And where do the people gather? Where is the magic made? And where are the Goddess and the Old Ones?

HP:

> Our shrines are in the fields and on the mountains, in the stars and in the wind, deep in the greenwood and on the algal rocks where two streams meet. But the shrines are deserted, and if we gathered in the arms of the Moon for our ancient rites to be with our gods as we were of old, we would be stopped by the dead who now rule the Mother's land and claim rights of ownership on the Mother's breast, and make laws of division and frustration for us.

HPS:

> We can no longer gather with our gods in a public place and the old rites of communion have been driven from the towns and cities ever deeper into the heath where barely a handful of heathens have remained to guard the old secrets and enact the old rites. There is magic in the heath far from the cold grey society, and there are islands of magic hidden in the entrails of the metropolis behind closed doors, but the people are few, and the barriers between us are formidable.

HP:

> The old religion has become a dark way, obscure, and hidden in the protective bosom of the night. Thin fingers turn the pages of a book of shadows while the sunshine seeks in vain his worshippers in his leafy glades.

Harper:

> Here, then, is the basic reason for a Pagan Movement; we must create a pagan society wherein everyone shall be free to worship the goddesses and gods of nature, and the relationship between a worshipper and their gods shall be sacred and inviolable, provided only that in their love of their own gods, they doesn't curse the names of the gods of others.

HPS:

> It's not yet our business to press the law-makers with undivided endeavor to unmake the laws of repression and, with the Mother's love, it may never become our business for the stifling tides of dogmatism are at last already in ebb. Our first work, and our greatest wish, is to come together, to be with each other in our tribes for we haven't yet grown from the Mother's breast to the stature of the gods.

HP:

> We're of the earth, and sibs to all the children of wild nature, born long ago in the warm mud of the ocean floor; we were together then, and we were together in the rain forests long before that dark day when, beguiled by the pride of the Sky Father, and forgetful of the Mother's love, we killed her earlier-born children and impoverished the old genetic pool.

Grey Man:

> The Red child lives yet in America; the Black Child has not forsaken the gods; the old Australians are still with their nature gods; the Old Ones still live deep in the heart of Mother India, and the White Child has still a foot on the old Wiccan way, but Neanderthaler is no more and her magic faded as the Lli and the Archan burst their banks and the ocean flowed in to divide the Isle of Erin from the land of the White Goddess. Man looked with one eye on a two-faced god when he reached for the heavens and scorned the Earth which alone is our life and our provider and the bosom to which we have ever returned since the dawn of Time.

Harper:

> He who looks only to reason to plum the unfathomable is a fool, for logic is an echo already implicit in the question, and it has no voice of its own; but he is no greater fool than he who scorns logic or derides its impotence from afar, but fears to engage in fair combat when he stands on his opponent's threshold. Don't turn your back on Reason, for his thrust is deadly; but confound him and he'll yield for his code of combat is honorable. So here is more of the work of the Pagan Movement.

HPS:

> Our lore has become encrusted over the ages with occult trivia and the empty vapourings of the lost. The occult arts are in a state of extreme decadence, astrology is in a state of disrepute and fears to confront the statistician's sword; alien creeds oust our native arts and, being as little understood as our own forgotten arts, are just as futile for their lack of understanding, and more so for their unfamiliarity.

HP:

> Misunderstanding is rife. Disbelief is black on every horizon, and vampires abound on the blood of the credulous. Our work is to reject the trivial, the irrelevant and the erroneous, and to bring the lost children of the Earth Mother again into the court of the Sky Father where reason alone will avail.

Harper:

> Belief is the deceit of the credulous; it has no place in the heart of a pagan.

Grey Man:

> But while we are sad for those who are bemused by Reason, we are deadened by those who see no further than his syllogisms as he turns the eternal wheel of the Great Tautology.

HP:

> We were not fashioned in the mathematician's computations, and we were old when the first alchemist was a child.

HPS:

> We have walked in the magic forest, bewitched in the old Green Things; we have seen the cauldron and the one become many and the many in the one; we know the Silver Maid of the moonlight and the sounds of the cloven feet. We have heard the pipes on the twilight ferns, and we've seen the spells of the enchantress, and Time be stilled. We've been into eternal darkness where the Night Mare rides and rode her to the edge of the Abyss, and beyond, and we know the dark face of the Rising Sun.

Harper:

Spin a spell or words and make a magic knot; spin it on the magic loom and spin it with the gods. Say it in the old chant and say it to the Goddess, and in her name. Say it to a dark well and breathe it on a stone.

HP:

There are no signposts on the untrod way,

HPS:

but we'll make our rituals together and bring them as our gifts to the Goddess and her God in the great rites.

(HP/S turn to Circle)

HP:

Here, then, is our work in the Pagan Movement; to make magic in the name of our gods, to share our magic where the gods would wish it, and to come together in our ancient festivals of birth, and life, of death and of change in the old rhythm.

HPS:

We'll print the rituals that can be shared in the written work;

HP:

We'll do all in our power to bring the people together, to teach those who would learn, and to learn from those who can teach.

HPS:

We will initiate groups, bring people to groups, and groups to other groups in our common devotion to the goddesses and gods of nature.

HP:

We will not storm the secrets of any coven, nor profane the tools, the magic, and still less, the gods of another.

HPS:

> We'll collect the myths of the ages, of our people and of the pagans of other lands, and we'll study the books of the wise and we'll talk to the very young.

HP:

> And whatever the pagan needs in their study, or their worship, then it is our concern, and the Movement's business to do everything possible to help each other in our worship of the gods we love.

HPS:

> We are committed with the lone pagan on the seashore, with he who worships in the fastness of a mountain range or she who sings the old chant in a lost valley far from the metalloid road.

HP:

> We are committed with the wanderer, and equally with the prisoner, disinherited from the Mother's milk in the darkness of the industrial webs.

HPS:

> We are committed too with the coven, with the circular dance in the light of the full moon, with the great festivals of the sun, and with the gatherings of the people.

HP:

> We are committed to build our temples in the towns and in the wilderness, to buy the lands and the streams from the landowners and give them to the Goddess for her children's use, and we'll replant the greenwood as it was of old for love of the dryad stillness, and for love of our children's children.

HP/S:

This we will do. What will you? (At this point, HP/S should walk around the Circle and "gather" the pledges from those in Circle who wish to give them. Participants should think carefully about what they wish to pledge before the Gods in this ritual. When all pledges are gathered, HP/S takes them to the Grey Man)

HPS:

When the streams flow clear and the winds blow pure, and the sun never more rises unrenowned nor the moon ride in the skies unloved;

HP:

when the stones tell of the Horned God and the greenwood grows deep to call back her own ones, then our work will be ended

HP/S:

and the Pagan Movement will return to the beloved womb of our old religion, to the nature goddesses and gods of paganism. (Grey Man nods, receives the pledges and palms flash powder unobtrusively. Conducts HP/S to the Crone. Grey Man opens hands and lets paper fall on candle. Crone pours hot water on dry ice, stands up, throws back hood of cape)

Crone:

I have heard your call across the mountains. I have heard your cries within the web of life and I have come once more. Single is the race, single of men and Gods. From a single source we both draw breath, but a difference of power in everything keeps us apart. You are the children of my heart - the light of my Soul. And I bring with me the seeds of your ancestors that I have kept safe for you. Like the cycle of the seasons, I give them again that you may plant yet again. Sow the seeds for yourselves , for your children, and your children's children.

(Crone hands basket of seeds to HP/S. Reaches into the well again and draws out chalice from cauldron.)

The chalice contains the blood of those who have died for the crime of being different, the sweat of those who toiled that the path of the Old Ones might survive, and the tears of those who thought themselves alone. The cauldron of the Gods is that of change - of turning evil to good, death to life. Through the power of the Cauldron, turn the blood of death to the water of life, turn the crime of being different to the strength of being whole. Turn the sweat of toil to the joy of work well done. Turn the tears of those alone to the tears of family reunited. The present is the balance between the past and the future. The power lies within your heart, within your hands. Do you have the courage? The choice is his, the choice is hers, the choice is yours. Can you make a difference? WILL you make a difference?

(Crone hands chalice to HP/S and wraps cloak around her, sitting down once more.)

HP/S spiral back out to the Circle.

Chalice blessing:

HP:

Be it known that a man is not greater than a woman

HPS:

Nor is woman greater than man

HP:

For what one lacks

HPS:

The other can provide

HP:

As the athame is to the male

HPS:

So is the cup to the female

HP/S:

> And when conjoined, they become one in truth. For there is no greater magick in all the world than that of love.

Cakes Blessing:

HPS:

> Be it known that death is not the end of life...

HP:

> But the beginning of the cycle of rebirth.

HPS:

> As grain is touched by death's scythe...

HP:

> And passes through fire to be reborn as bread...

HPS:

> So are we reborn, passing through death into the next life.

(High Priest draws Invoking Pentagram over cakes with Athame, while both say:

HP/S:

> As the Earth gives its life to strengthen us, so shall we, in death, strengthen the Earth, for life and death together are the cycle of rebirth.

HP/S take of cakes and wine and pass the basket and chalice to quarters callers to take to the Circle.

> We all come from the Goddess
> And to Her we shall return
> Like a drop or rain
> Flowing to the ocean

We all come from the Horned One
And to Him we shall return
Like a flash of flame
Ascending to the heavens.

Hoof and Horn
Hoof and Horn
All that dies shall be reborn
Vine and Grain
Vine and Grain
All that falls shall rise again.

(The chant may evolve into others such as the Isis Astarte and corresponding God chants. Go with the flow. When all in the Circle have partaken of cakes and wine, the chalice comes back to the HP and HPS, who take it to the Harper. Harper eats and drinks, takes cakes and wine to Grey Man. Grey Man eats and drinks, takes cakes and wine to Crone, who eats, drinks, and receives seeds and chalice again. Replaces chalice in Cauldron, covers seeds with cloak. When HPS feels energy has built to a peak, she calls a halt to it by raising her arms and dropping them to her sides.)

HP/S:

Remember this night. Take the energy that has been raised here by your sisters and brothers and put it into your pledges. YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

HPS:

Hunter, for Your prowess
Warrior, for Your skill
Father for Your Guidance
Ancient One, Horned Crowned,
We thank you and bid you Hail and Farewell!

HP:

Maiden, for Your flowers.
Mother, for Your child.
Old One, for Your Wisdom.
Bright Lady, Cerridwen, we thank You
And bid you Hail and Farewell!

Spirits of the North!
Earth, Body of our ancestors.
Go with us from this place
United as heirs of our ancestors.

Spirits of the West!
Water, Blood of our ancestors.
We have the courage to dare to do the work.
Go with us from this place
United as heirs of our ancestors.

Spirits of the South,
Fire, will of our ancestors.
We have the will to do that which we promised
Go with us from this place
United as heirs of our ancestors.

Spirits of the East
Air, breath of our ancestors.
We KNOW that we are the children of the Gods and all one family.
Go with us from this place
United as heirs of our ancestors.

HP draws power back up into the blade of the sword/athame and earths the power. HP, HPS, Harper, Grey Man and Crone move into a circle. The next five lines should be shot from person to person, to form a pentagram:

HPS:

The Circle is Open

HP:

But not forgotten!

Harper:

The Circle is unbroken.

Grey Man:

> Nothing is forgotten

Crone:

> The Circle is Free

All:

> Nothing is ever forgotten

HPS, HP, Harper, Grey Man, and Crone join the larger Circle. HPS or Harper calls out lines of Amazing Grace to the Circle as all sing.

> Amazing Grace! How sweet the Earth
> That formed a Witch like me
> I once was burned, now I survive
> Was hanged, but now I sing.

> Twas grace that drew down the moon
> And grace that raised the sea
> The magick of the people's will
> Will set our Mother free!

> Amazing Grace! How sweet the Earth
> That formed a Witch like me
> I once was burned, but now I thrive
> Was hanged but now I sing.

HPS:

Blessed Be!

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